Impact of Globalization on Higher Education: An Empirical Study of Education Policy & Planning of Design Education in Hong Kong

Yan Yan Lam

Department of Design Foundation Studies,

Hong Kong Design Institute Room B1041, HKDI, 3 King Ling Road, Tseung Kwan O, NT, Hong Kong

Tel: 852-3928 2948   E-mail: yanyan@vtc.edu.hk

Abstract

This paper focuses on the impact of globalization in the domain of higher education, particularly, design education. It reviews how globalization may affect educational policy and planning in Hong Kong by drawing on an empirical study involving senior management, a course leader and a design trainer/facilitator. This paper not only illustrates the challenges of globalization to education sectors worldwide, but also brings the merits of globalization in education to the fore and considers the challenges that it presents to multidimensional phenomena. The diversity of curricula; professional mobility; accountability and quality remain as parts of a continuing dialogue in the context of the global community. Research into these issues could trigger and influence thinking on how local design education (in the tertiary and higher education sectors) might be restructured to satisfy educators' hopes and desires for an ideal future in which design is promoted as being more imaginative, innovative, and eliciting wider responses to ideas, experiences, feelings, emotions, and intercultural cooperation in a globalizing world in both developed and developing nations. Rich data were collected through a series of individual interviews with design students, teaching staff and design practitioners together with a focus group discussion with key members of a curriculum planing team. This data were analyzed with reference to current literature on globalization, education reform and course planning strategy. The author was inspired by the fact that globalization drives changes in education towards global perspectives. However, institutions, society, stakeholders and the public, as well as governments in this global world, should be sharing the goal of ever-increasing excellence in teaching combined with concern for local and global contexts. The impact of globalization on education (design education) is a subject of debate and discourse within the whole global community.

Keywords: Globalization, Education Reform, Curriculum, Design Education, Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, Hong Kong

1. Introduction

This paper covers the essential elements of 'globalization' in a coherent and detailed discussion of the theoretical background, definitions and the impact on education in general higher education specifically. The paper interprets the impact on education and pays special attention to transnational education, lifelong education, education reform, and the areas of changes in design education in the future. The discussion and interpretation are rounded off by the author's own empirical observation, study and experience of specific dimensions of the impact of globalization on the Education sector in Hong Kong. In particular, these observations and experiences are concerned with the application of a broad theoretical concept to a concrete situation covering education management, course planning, pedagogical approach, accountability, quality, accreditation and funding. The study depicts that, inevitably, the international recognition of diplomas and degrees, and a balanced curriculum of core knowledge and competencies and technology, along with teaching profiles, are all areas that will be platforms for future opportunities and developments in all aspects of education in the integrated knowledge-driven community.

2. What is Globalization?

2.1 Globalization in a Complex Context

Globalization is the buzzword of the decade. It is a generic term which has reached into every corner of society. It is not easy to ascertain (Burbules et al. 2000) what is at stake in the globalization issue, the functions that the term actually serves, and its consequences for contemporary theory, policy, and critical pedagogy.

McBurnie commented (Uvali'c-Trumbi'c, 2002) that globalization raises new issues and throws a new light on some old issues which indicate the necessity for changes in how the higher education community thinks of itself in the global context and in how it shares problems and collaborates in the search for solutions. This concept is

explained further by Blackmore et al. (2007). They suggested that globalization has become an ideological discourse that drives change and that there is a perception of urgency in the need to respond to a new world order in which the old forms are not dead but the new forms are not yet fully fledged. In this respect, Held (1995) in his '*Democracy and Global Order',* described a new 'Global Middle Ages', a period reflecting that while nation-states still have some vitality, they cannot control their borders and are therefore subject to all sorts of internal and external pressures. In the light of the evolving pressures of globalization in education, McBurnie indicated (Uvali'c -Trumbi'c ,2002) that two of the key goals identified by the September 2001 meeting of experts under the auspices of UNESCO were 'to promote education as public good ', and 'to promote quality assurance beyond national borders'. Nevertheless, Kellner (1995) defined globalization as a multivalent term that can be described either positively or negatively. It must be seen as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon that involves different levels, flows, tensions, and conflicts, and has to be described in terms of the highly complex and multidimensional processes in economy, policy, culture, education, and everyday life. This concept was extended by Held and McGrow (2003), who suggested that globalization can also refer to those spatio-temporal processes of change which underpin a transformation to an organization or to everyday life by linking and expanding human activities across regions and continents. In this sense, globalization implies connections across frontiers which are not just occasional or random, but rather are regularized. Suzuki (2003) agreed that it is difficult to define globalization in a decisive term, but it may deviate sharply from previous various approaches to organizing the economy. He utilised Leslie Sklair's useful typologies to elaborate his point of view further. According to Sklair (1998), there are multiple ways of understanding or approaching the notion and image of globalization. These include the world-system approach, global culture approach, global society approach and global capitalism approach.

From the above studies, theorists find that globalization has been involved in a fundamental restructuring and reorganization of the world economy, policy and environment in a complex context (Brown, 1999). Globalization also brings with it a global awareness of the planetary perspective and enlarges our senses of time and space, which implies a greater sense of community within this global environment (Giddens, 1999). However, Burbules et al. (2000) defined globalization as a certain loss of nation-state sovereignty, or at least the erosion of national autonomy, and correspondingly a weakening of the notion of the 'citizen' as a unified and unifying concept, a concept that can be characterized by precise roles, rights, obligations and status. According to many theorists, we live in an age in which globalization is the defining concept, while others find claims that it is a discourse that takes advantage of the historical processes of globalization in order to valorize particular economic prescriptions about how to control the economy, through free trade, deregulation and the like (Hirst et al. 1999) – and by implication, prescriptions leading the reform of education, politics and culture.

2.2 Globalization in a Mobility Context

Globalization is a flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values and ideas and it is also known as mobility in many forms such as information, knowledge, people and employment (Carnoy, 1999; Hirst et al. 1999). The United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID, White Paper, 2000) has defined globalization as:

The growing interdependence and interconnectedness of the modern world through increased flows of goods, services, capital, people and information. Technological advances drive the process and reductions in the costs of international transactions, which spread technology and ideas, raise the share of trade in world production and increase the mobility of capita.

This process of reorientation is described as internationalization. The internationalization of its higher education is one of the ways in which a country responds to the demands of globalization. Globalization is the cause and internationalization is the effect in response.

Gnanam (Uvali'c-Trumbi'c, 2002) denoted that the globalization of economics creates opportunities for the mobility of knowledge-workers and knowledge-seekers across the world in volumes unprecedented in history. If a particular country has difficulties in finding certain professions inland, globalization means that it has increasing opportunities to search for potential candidates wherever they might be available; and if professionals are unable to find a suitable job locally, they are increasingly in a position to look for opportunities internationally.   Carnoy (1999:15) further expressed that globalization creates a real impact on the organization of work and on the work people do, worldwide and that work is becoming organized around the notions of flexibility. This in turn involves restructuring the social policy and economic process to allow for a free flow, also an education reform at the national and international levels. To respond effectively to this new issue, Hong Kong's design education and creative industry are both challenged by the increasing globalization of the

marketplace.

2.3 Globalization in an Educational Context

Globalization is primarily a perceived set of changes that include the shaping of new, global forms in culture, the media and technologies of communication that nations have to accept and follow in order to be able to embrace global competition and respond positively (Carnoy, 1999; Van Damm, 2001). In addressing the concerns of global competition, in part, as a response to the impacts of globalization, education is becoming one of the important sectors, and the restructuring of educational policy and organizing educational achievement are being demanded. Filippov (Uvali'c-Trumbi'c,2002) recalled that the proceedings of a UNESCO meeting of experts held in Paris on 10-11 September 2001, chaired by D. Van Damme, was convened to discuss the impact of globalization on higher education. The 'Principal Report' included an analysis of the impact of globalization on higher education, particularly on such sensitive aspects as quality, accreditation and the recognition of qualifications.   Globalization seems to demand and impose rules and priorities that supersede the long-wished-for goal of integration mechanisms for international collaboration in education. The essence of internationalization (DfID, White Paper, 2000) is to imply collaboration, including marketing, primarily through exchanges or cooperation, whereas globalization implies dealing with higher education on a purely commercial basis. It was feared that governments having traditions of free higher education systems would endeavor to uproot this fundamental constitutional guarantee and switch to regarding higher education as a 'public good' – a public system of education. The 'Education For All' programme, so defined by UNESCO, was established to guarantee the human right to free access to quality education (Vanlathem, 2003). Suggestions that 'Education for All' might come to be viewed as a mere 'educational service' appear to be unsubstantiated. Additionally, the foremost issues are institutional autonomy and academic freedom in exercising professionalism to develop relevant and response programmes (Nunn, 2001; Education Commission, 2004a). In the face of such pressures, more research studies of educational policy and planning are highly demanded within and between nations to identify the prominent paradigms of education reforms (evaluation, financing, assessment, standards, professional training, curriculum), processes and impacts of globalization on education (Uvalic'c-Trumbi'c, 2002; Tikly et al. 2003).

3. Globalization and Education Reform in Hong Kong

Facing the challenges (globalization) of the twenty-first Century, the Progress Report Education Reform (1) **(**Education Commission 2002**)** stated that the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has committed to reform education with a view to coping with the demands of the ever-changing expectations of the community and the development of a knowledge-based society in the modern world. The Report stressed that Hong Kong people must develop a high level of language proficiency and IT skills and the ability to think critically and laterally; equally important is the intellectual curiosity to pursue lifelong learning, strength of character to hold up the vagaries of life and the ability to work with a group of different people. In response to these challenges and needs, the urgency to reform the education system in Hong Kong was announced in the blueprint for education entitled '*Learning for life, learning through Life*' (Education Commission 2000).

Since the early to mid-1990s, like many societies throughout the Asia Pacific Region and beyond, Hong Kong has been committed actively to continuous education reforms that embrace almost the entire breadth and depth of issues in all levels of education. Dowson et al. (2003) indicated that the recent reform initiatives are driven by the Blueprint for the twenty-first Century, which mandates the overall aims of education at different levels and a framework for implementing those tasks.

The HKSAR regards this education reform not only as an arduous task, but also as a hugely complex exercise affecting different sectors and agencies involved in its implementation. Recent and immediate tasks include decentralization, the raising of standards, increasing accountability and equity, and building flexible pathways for those in the teaching profession. In this respect, the 2001 Policy Address of the Chief Executive of the HKSAR outlined three goals for education reform in Hong Kong. The first goal was to upgrade the general standards of the academic performances of both primary and secondary students through the education reform in order to equip them with the attitude that learning is unequivocally enjoyable, to raise their communication skills along with their creativity and innovation, and to acquire the courage to accept responsibility. The second goal was to increase the opportunity of post-secondary study (Hayhoe, 2001), enabling up to 60% of senior secondary school-leavers to continue studying, in order to be competitive in this global world. In doing so, the post-secondary and university system needs to cater more for outstanding post-secondary graduates and, to answer this call, educational providers from both government and non-government sectors have launched many

market-free (also known as self-financed) courses. The third goal was to reinforce the attitude to lifelong learning and encourage Hong Kong people to actively enhance and upgrade their own knowledge and skills to meet the demands and the development of the knowledge-based economy

- a response to the demand for profession mobility and its impact on character and capability building.

Historically, in 1978, Hong Kong introduced a system of nine-year universal education (from the ages of 6 to 15). Most secondary schools offer three-year junior and two-year senior secondary courses leading to the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), followed by a two-year matriculation course leading to the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) for admission to degree programmes. This academic structure is commonly known as '3+2+2+3'. In 2009, Hong Kong introduced a 3-year junior and a 3-year senior secondary education system leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), and altered the previous three-year university degree structure to a four-year programme, replacing HKCEE and HKALE, and this new academic structure is commonly known as '3+3+4'. Under the new system, all students will receive 6 years of secondary education. The first cohort of students taught in the new senior secondary (NSS) curriculum will graduate in 2012 after sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination (Education Commission, 2006: Progress Report Education Reform 4). Diagram 1 (see Appendix 1) illustrates the differences between the previous academic structure '3+2+2+3' and the new academic structure '3+3+4' for senior secondary and higher education.

This new policy of changing the length of study from seven to six years of secondary schooling will inevitably have radical implications for higher education. In consideration of the college/university admissions system, the interface between schools and the post-secondary sector has to be managed well. In addition, the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) needs to put effort into introducing the new system to other countries/jurisdictions which also have six years of secondary education, rather than seven, in a baccalaureate style examination (Education Commission, 2006). It is expected that the NSS academic structure will articulate with education systems around the world, so that the HKSDE will be recognized and accepted well (Education and Manpower Bureau, May 2005). In doing so, it is necessary to benchmark the current standards of HKCEE and HKALE which have been well recognized internationally.

The Hong Kong Policy Address (2004) indicated the HKSAR Government's recognition that in the transition to a knowledge-based economy, improved training and retraining to increase competitiveness among countries has to come before economic growth can bring about increased employment, and that this is an important task for the government (Carnoy, 1999; Hirst, 1999). Training and retraining have to be promoted continually through the introduction of courses/programmes that are able to provide a seamless pathway for secondary school leavers under this new academic structure. Equally important, there is also a need for more diverse educational opportunities to suit individual interests and aptitudes so as to develop and enhance each person's ability to the fullest and to meet the demands of both the local and the global markets.

4. The Impact of Globalization on Hong Kong Higher Education (Design)

Globalization means that education opportunities are wider and borderless (Van Damme, 2001). According to Sato (2002), globalization augments the diversity of learning opportunities to people worldwide, inspite of the difficulty of assessing the content, quality, and reliability of higher education beyond national boundaries. In this regard Carnoy and Rhoten (2002) argued that globalization has impacts on higher education including: a decrease in public funding, strategic effects on the labor market, the quality of national educational systems and the adoption information technology to expand the quantity of education at a low cost. Mala Singh, in his paper,' *International Quality Assurance, Ethics and the Market: A View from Developing Countries'*, (Uvali'c-Trumbi'c, 2002:175) highlighted that, in many countries, higher education systems have been forced to restructure in order to cope with the impact of globalization on education (Altbach, 2001), for instance the need to demonstrate efficiency, effectiveness and value for money with 'accountability frameworks' to allow greater stakeholder scrutiny and declining investment of public funds, the requirement *'to do more with less'* and the separation of higher education functions traditionally housed within one and the same institutional framework.

The University Grants Committee (UGC) published '*Higher Education in Hong Kong'* in 1996. This comprehensive report covered the whole post-secondary education and flagged the dynamic changes in educational policy. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Government declared a strategic intent to increase the participation rate of the relevant age group to 60% by the year 2010, as one of the major achievements of the education reform. The UGC Report, in line with the basic line of the education reform, promoted a diversified and interlinked system of higher education as well as the concentration of resources to reward quality performance and excellence of collaborative efforts among institutions. One of the evidences is the rapid growth

of transnational education (self-financed) that includes top-up degrees, distance learning and lifelong learning (Van Damme, 2001; Mc Burnie et al. 2001; Uvali'c-Trumbi'c, 2002) in the post-secondary and higher education sectors in Hong Kong.

4.1 Transnational Education (Top-up Degrees)

The UNESCO/Council of Europe (2000) defined transnational education as all types of higher education study programmes or education services, including those of distance education, in which the learners are located in a country different from where the awarding institution is based. According to McBurnie's paper, *'Transnational Education, Quality and the Public Good: Case Studies from South-East Asia'*, Uvali'c –Trumbi'c (2002), transnational education encapsulates the essential facets of the impact of globalization on higher education. Transnational education provides the flexibility of globally mobile programmes operated as tradable higher education services among countries. It is facilitated effectively by information and communications technology, innovative delivery modes and partnerships, with demand fuelled by the exigencies of the knowledge-driven economy and the establishment of lifelong learning. There is evidence in Hong Kong that transnational education results from merging the interests of the sending and receiving institutions and is regarded as a positive way of accessing programmes that may not be able to be established nationally. A good example illustrated here is the School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE), a member of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) Group. The SHAPE offers a wide range of top-up degree programmes in collaboration with local and overseas universities, including Mainland China, UK and Australia, for its higher diploma graduates to pursue a desirable degree (Top-up Degree Prospectus for HD Graduate 2010/11).

4.2 Transnational Education (Lifelong Learning)

In correlation with the establishment of top-up degrees in Hong Kong, the idea of lifelong learning is rapidly opening the way to a generalized possibility of entering higher education at various stages of life. The learning mode has no boundaries of age or previous levels of study since the point of entry is not necessarily immediately after the completion of secondary education. This situation certainly not only provides young people with free choices that enable them to pursue their studies or enter the workforce after their formal education, but also provides opportunities for people of all ages to broaden and deepen their general levels of education throughout their lives in order to enhance and acquire the knowledge and skills demanded by a knowledge-driven society (Uvali'c –Trumbi'c, 2002). This phenomenon creates a twofold purpose in post-secondary education – preparing young people for higher education and preparing them for their working lives (HKDI, CDT Report 1, 2007).

Inspire of its goodwill, transnational education has caused a host of potential tribulations. These include: the erosion of the local system, an undermining of the government's power to govern education within its borders, policy and the expectations predicated on it, and a decline in the equality of education arising from the overall concern that, in the eyes of the public, the good aspects of education may be damaged or redefined. This also calls into question the sufficiency of national approaches to quality assurance (Knight, 1999). In this respect, Blight et al. (1999) foresaw that the demand for transnational education by a sample of Asia countries (except China) will exceed 480,000 students by the year 2020 (Uvali'c –Trumbi'c, 2002: 160). As a result, providers are addressing the demand and governments are responding to regulatory challenges. Indeed, it is necessary to unpack the benefits of transnational education in order to situate it in relation to the public good. French (1999:221) gave one example:

For the registration of courses offered in Hong Kong by higher and professional education providers based outside Hong Kong either themselves or through a local agent or a collaborating institution: The focus of the registration process is a requirement for overseas providers to give assurance to the satisfaction of the Registrar (the Director of Education of Hong Kong) that the standards of their courses as delivered in Hong Kong are maintained at levels comparable with courses conducted in the countries in which the overseas institutions are situated and leading to the same qualifications, and that they are recognized as such by the given institutions, the academic communities in the countries concerned, and the relevant accreditation authorities (if any).

From the above example, we can see that complex procedures have to be implemented if a smooth articulation is to be ensured between the new senior secondary (NSS) and the post-secondary sub-degree (diploma and higher diploma) programmes, and if the quality assurance of educational outcomes is guaranteed (Education and Manpower Bureau, May 2005).

4.3 Hong Kong as A Creative Capital in Region

The HKSAR 2007-08 Policy Address stipulated that globalization has brought about the flourishing of various cultural and creative industries which include leisure goods, advertising, film, television, tourism, design,

architecture and art.   The Policy address emphasized that, with intense competition in the creative industries, it is crucial to draw up overall strategic plans for future development, complementary facilities and manpower training in collaboration with various sectors which include government, non-government organizations, professional bodies and education bodies (Qiang, 2003). In Hong Kong, one of the strategic intents is to nurture a large pool of creative talents to develop sensibilities and abilities in creativity, artistic and cultural appreciation, all are the central roles of all levels of education: primary, secondary, tertiary and higher education. To meet the identified initiatives, such as developing artistic and cultural appreciation in primary and secondary students; promoting university training for the creative and performing arts and cultural talents, and revitalizing Hong Kong as Asia's world city, education providers and curriculum designers have to launch new programmes with global recognition of the qualifications.

The study denotes that SD and HKDI have the longest records of developing design education, and have implemented dramatic changes in design education at tertiary and higher education levels. Diverse programmes are offered to meet the needs of global creative industries and curricula design follows a new, integrated and multidisciplinary approach (SD Prospectus 2008/09; HKDI, Prospectus 2008/09; HKDI CDT Report 1, 2007). However, regarding art and design education at the primary and secondary levels, Heskett (2003) addressed the following challenge:

Without a preparation for creativity and the establishment of principles of visual literacy and competency in primary and secondary education, degree courses will struggle to establish appropriate standards. (Heskett, 2003: 49).

Heskett suggested that the design education system in Hong Kong needs to do more to engender high standards at undergraduate level, to create an education system that balances basic techniques, conceptual and communication skills, specialisations that will ensure employability, and understanding of design in its business context. In addition, to achieve excellence in programme planning educators need to be responsive to the industry's needs and expectations because they provide employment opportunities, hence educational reform should be a partnership between educators and business (Heskett, 2003; White 2004). In response to suggestions such as Heskett's, the purpose of this study was to depict that a well balanced curriculum of core knowledge , competencies and technology is vital if a quality, responsive and competitive programme of diplomas and degrees is ensured.

5. Methodology

Data for this study were collected through a series of individual interviews with design students and teaching staff and a focus group discussion with the key members of the Curriculum Planning Team of the Visual Communication Courses in the Department of Design, Institute of Vocational Education (IVE), a member of the Vocational Training Council (VTC). Three in-depth interviews with design practitioners in the role of course advisors of IVE and other institutions were also conducted. These data were analyzed with reference to the current literature on globalization, education reform and course planning strategy. The discussion and interpretation in this paper are concluded with an account of the researcher's own experience as a course leader, administrator and teacher and findings from a constituency of stakeholders in order to examine critically how globalization actually influences education policy and planning in the knowledge-based economy in Hong Kong. Research into these issues could influence thinking about how education might be restricted in order to satisfy our hopes and desires for an ideal future in which to promote intercultural cooperation in a globalizing world, in both developed and developing countries.

6. Empirical study: A critical examination, from diverse perspectives, of how the impact of globalization affects education policy and curriculum design in Hong Kong.

6.1 From a Management Perspective: Formulating Policy and Monitoring Accountability

6.1.1 Accountability and Quality Assurance

Since the 1990s, accountability and quality assurance have become a central concern for higher education in many developed and developing countries and Hong Kong is no exception. Accreditation processes such as institutional review and programme validation have contributed to the international recognition of diplomas and degrees and a negotiated consensus on core knowledge and competencies and their place in curricula (Van Damme, 2001, 2002). Issues have evolved progressively as the search for a new international context proceeds and debate continues on the role and form of accountability and quality assurance in higher education (Carnoy, 1999; Van Damme, 2001; Uvali'c-Trumbi'c, 2002,).

There is evidence that, in view of the development of the Government Qualifications Framework (QF) and

Quality Assurance framework (QA) and the need to reinforce the quality brand, the Vocational Training Council (VTC) has committed to an institutional accreditation by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), formerly known as the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation (HKCAA). The entire quality-assurance process is intended to be open, transparent and interactive with counterparts from departments and institutions. The implementation of the quality-assurance mechanism will, from the management perspective, provide accountability of the quality of work of the institution, which will increase competitiveness and international recognition. However, a side effect of the accreditation will be an increase in the workload of academic staff since it will call for a large amount of documentation on the progress and process of teaching. Consequently, new thoughts on manpower planning to cope with these new challenges and needs forced by the globalization are crucial in the domain of education worldwide.

6.1.2 Staff Development Policy for Trainers/Facilitators

Education providers aim to be recognized as the leading innovator in education and training nationally and internationally. Underpinning this is a commitment to achieving excellence in the teaching and learning processes as measured by international standards. It is argued that, to ensure quality of teaching and learning, relevant educational development opportunities for teachers and instructors have become priorities in the management of departments and disciplines. The acceleration in the advance of knowledge means that individuals must constantly update their knowledge in order to cope with the new demands and establishment of programmes so as to contribute to learning to learn and learning to be enterprising (Seddoh, 2000). Every academic year each department should have a staff development proposal aimed at providing continuing professional development opportunities for teachers and instructors so that they remain up-to-date in their disciplinary knowledge and abreast of modern pedagogy, including the use of new technologies (Brown, 1999; Uvali'c-Trumbi'c, 2002). Consequently, teachers and instructors are encouraged to be involved actively in career-long professional development in both their academic disciplines and their teaching practices. As Kellner (1995) remarked, globalization can be defined as a multivalent term that can be described either positively or negatively. To take the positive view, staff development policy is good to develop new teaching skills and up-to-date technology applications in teaching in order to wed the demands of the market and education policy (Carnoy, 1999; Van Damme, 2001). However, from the negative perspective, the heavy workload of staff and the speed of the development of new technology make it hard to pursue their study effectively in the short time available. In part, to respond to this force of globalization, management needs to search for private funding to support this initiative (Sato, 2000). Indeed, currently staffing and staff development for learning programmes is one of the prominent performance indicators of academic accreditation to prove the accountability and quality assurance of programmes/courses (HKCAAVQ accreditation document).

However, as economies globalize, opportunities for the mobility of knowledge-workers and knowledge-seekers across borders are increased. Anderson (1994) commented that the passport has come to denote permission to work more than a connection to any essential collective identity. With this enhancement of profession mobility, it is foreseen that staff development may not be as important as now, since a college/university can seek potential candidates elsewhere. Furthermore, owing to rapid changes in social structures, it is hard to establish a long-term staff development plan cost-effectively. Substantially, professional development for individuals should be increased in order to maximize the value added to one's potential, thus expanding the opportunities for education and building of a lifelong-learning society (Education Commission, 2000).

6.1.3 Articulation with Top-Up Degree Programme

To attempt a course or programme that is successful and competitive among the providers and institutions both locally and internationally, it is crucial to promote a clear articulation arrangement in the knowledge-based society at the national and international levels (Education and Manpower Bureau, May 2005). To respond to this impact of globalization, colleges in Hong Kong have been urged to introduce top-up degree programmes, which are joint degree programmes for higher diploma graduates equivalent to semesters 5 and 6 of the degree programmes of the host university, to create a pathway to university degrees for the higher diploma students. For example, in the case of HKDI top-up degrees commenced in the academic year 2004/2005 and are being increased progressively to align with the development of its higher diploma programmes. As senior management staff, our efforts can be seen in the success of the articulation with top-up degree programmes, which is good for students. However, pressure is exerted not only from the arguments about whether the quality is compatible with a formal university degree but also from the patterns of collaboration with institutions under the state regulation. Notwithstanding, looking at the present situation, it is believed that the articulation programme will become an established trend in higher education since it can create flexible pathways for further study and increase opportunities for higher education.

6.2 From a Course Leader's Perspective: Planning and Designing Course Curricula

6.2.1 Curriculum Reform: The Development and the Scenario for the Future

The author, as an experienced course leader, observed that the changing education demography should be followed by a re-thinking of definitions of fitness and appropriateness for particular purposes and objectives, and an enhanced flexibility in admission, credit-allocation, curriculum planning, decentralization and distribution of resources.

Under the impact of globalization, the education system (Education Commission, 2000) requires a visionary response in order to answer the proposed curriculum changes, with their greater emphasis on practical skills, vocational skills and generic skills as foundation training in tertiary and higher education. Substantively, the mission of programme designers of nowadays is to develop generic skills to mould an all-round image of citizenship, and to improve the learning and teaching atmosphere of electronically-based learning on-campus and off-campus with its potential for 24-hour global delivery.

Educators have experienced that the world of education and learning is changing dramatically because of the development and wide availability of the new technologies in this global world. For example, drawing competence used to be regarded as an essential training component of foundation study for design disciplines but, given the rapid development of the new technologies, the need for drawing training has been reflected in its lower weighting in terms of contact hours. In the past this accounted for 30 percent of the total learning hours but has now been trimmed down to 10 percent in the current curriculum. It is anticipated that drawing will be replaced totally by computers in future if the design education focus is only on visual presentation and not on the individual's development in design fundamentals.

The author argues that, in the design process, drawing not only depicts objects, but also develops, clarifies, refines and explains ideas (Lam, 2008), and is thus an essential aspect of the curriculum (Schenk, 2007). The importance of drawing is extended further by Menezes' (2007) idea that designers can read more information in drawings than was invested in their making. This view was also supported by a study visit arranged by the Vocational Training Council in 2004 to top design institutions in North America, Canada and the USA, with the aim of developing new approaches in design education. The Report of the visits (HKDI DIAB Paper 3/04) indicated that, irrespective of different approaches, all schools emphasized the development of drawing skills and the cultivation of an aesthetic sense which helps students to achieve visualization and ideation. For design education, there is no doubt that electronically based training (technology) is increasing in importance with the rise of the 'network' society and the expansion of the Internet. However, it is argued that drawing ability is equally important in providing a basic tool for effective, convincing communication of designers' messages to clients and others. If design education is to concern itself with the new technology, then it cannot be restrained with inherited aesthetic cultural values or imposed laws of absolute values (Green, 1974). A well-balanced curriculum of basic skills training and technology-based training has become a critical issue in design education, particularly in the field of design foundation studies.

6.2.2 The Challenges to Designing Curricula for the Global Community

In response to new developments in the curricula, institutions in Hong Kong, as in many other countries, have to concentrate on evolving a system that is broad-based and quality-oriented in order to merge into the global economy (Heskett, 2003). In the author's own case, programme teams have validated the curricula twice within three years. The major change was to expand the scope of learning content and context by introducing electives, integrated projects and collaborative projects with industry (Lam et al. 2007). In addition, some new modules are also being introduced to cope expressly with the demands of the market, e.g. China Cultural Studies and Putonghua, to match the needs of the commercial market in Mainland China (HKDA, Xpress Vol. 14, 2007; HKDI Discussion Forum Report 1, 2007).

Concern for curriculum planning is also consequent upon the phenomenal growth of knowledge and the emergence of new communication technologies and many multidisciplinary subject areas, which in turn means that the scope of education supply has also increased substantially (Heskett, 2003: HKDI Discussion Forum Report 1, 2007). New communication technologies and the Internet show the domain of new knowledge emerging as a key sector of design education, thereby creating a new demand in some countries and meeting demand in others where traditional institutions may find difficulties in managing this situation as one of the consequences (Van Damme, 2001). In Hong Kong, courses/programmes such as computer graphics and design studies, digital imaging and basic photography, exhibition graphics and environment design, packaging design and 3-D rendering and the like are all examples of inter-and multidisciplinary areas within design (SD Prospectus 2008/09; HKDI Prospectus 2008/09). In these years, many cases of interdisciplinary projects among

disciplines and departments have been introduced. All of these projects, unquestionably, widen and deepen the scope of learning and teaching, and also provide a positive solution to the increasing numbers of students and the shortfall in staff.

In the course of globalization, an education without frontiers will be implemented among developing and developed countries, with the opportunity for an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach to form a new trend in education and the certain consequence that education policy and planning for higher education will be affected both locally and internationally (CPU, Baseline Study, 2003; HKDC Propelling Design Thinking, 2007).

Following these changes, there is some goodwill in providing choices to students, thus enabling us, as educators, to cater to the needs and interests of the individual, at the same time as best meeting the expectations of the creative industry. Less assured, along with the programme continuity of study, is the quality of teaching and the specialties of staff. If the final aim of education is to cater to the needs of society and respond to the impact of globalization, the author expects such situations as the above to arise with increasing frequency, thus adding to the complexity of planning and developing curricula. As education trainers, we all believe that education is not a short-term investment and that the quality of teaching and learning has to be built on concrete experience and evaluation (White, 2004). Another concern is the further rapid development of new technology, which will undoubtedly affect the planning and delivery mode of learning and teaching, making it a potential area for further examination and investigation in the near future.

6.3 From a trainer's perspective: The New Role and the Challenges

In the context of educational policy and reform, and not exclusively in Hong Kong, education has embraced a business enterprise culture instead of being under government ownership in the global world, and the electronic delivery of knowledge in the knowledge-based society has undergone massive development (Uvali'c –Trumbi'c 2002: 21-32). Institutions of various forms, both locally and internationally, are beginning to share ownership in the knowledge-based economy. As a result, education is becoming more administration-centred, irrespective of the changes in teaching content. Accompanying these changes, on one hand, our role as trainers/facilitators is now to equip knowledge-workers or students to reconfigure and reshape knowledge in order to solve local problems, which is a different matter from the tradition of acquiring passive knowledge. Under the new approach trainers/facilitators are acquiring active means of delivering their messages, with the emphasis on generic and interpersonal skills training and administrative aptitudes. The teaching portfolio has becoming one of the essential elements to prove the trainer/teacher's quality of teaching and therefore a large amount of work on documentation can be expected.   Nowadays trainers/facilitators have to plan their time well to allow for heavier work loads that include not only teaching duties but engaging themselves in extra-curricular activities to augment students' exposure to other learning activities, and school promotion as well as self- professional development.

On the other hand, as was pointed out in a report by Sutherland (2002), the world of education and learning is changing significantly because of the development and wide availability of the new technologies. According to this report, we are not in a position at present to replace the roles of teachers, facilitators and trainers or to alter the teaching relationship, although one thing that is certain is that electronically based teaching is expanding the learning environment. The implementation of web teaching is highly encouraged, whether it is appropriate to particular modules or not. Electronically based modules have become a large proportion of the course content in design courses. Teachers and trainers are requested to employ electronic teaching aids and the modules and lectures presented have to be recorded as electronic files. The rapid growth of electronic-based learning has created the possibility of providing a free atmosphere for discussion among students, colleges and institutions. It acts as a borderless education format and its expansion is expected in the near future. Similarly, the role of the trainer/facilitator is expected to take on a new dimension in the knowledge-based economy.

7. Conclusions

In this paper, it has not been possible to develop a full, or even a comprehensive, picture of globalization as it may affect education policy and planning in Hong Kong, although it has been suggested that the continual growth and expansion of these conditions may be expected, as attested by the author's own experience, observation, and the general findings of this study. Although constrained in terms of scope, the author has none-the-less realized that the demand for post-secondary and higher education, especially for profession-oriented courses/programmes, is increasing in most countries, particularly in Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Mainland China and Malaysia. The reasons for this are the high demand for opportunities to enter higher education and the need for improvements in professional development. Inevitably,

frameworks for quality assurance, accountability and accreditation will all, in turn, become platforms for future opportunities and development in education in the global world. In the light of these developments, if the new demands and opportunities are to be faced and if the most is to be made of them, there has to be a change of culture. Research into these issues could influence thinking on how education might be re-structured in order to satisfy our hopes and desires, as educators, for an ideal future, particularly for design education, in the knowledge-based world.

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Appendix 1: Diagram 1

The diagram below illustrates the differences between the previous academic structure '3+2+2+3' (1978-2008) and the new academic structure '3+3+4' (2009 onwards) for senior secondary and higher education.
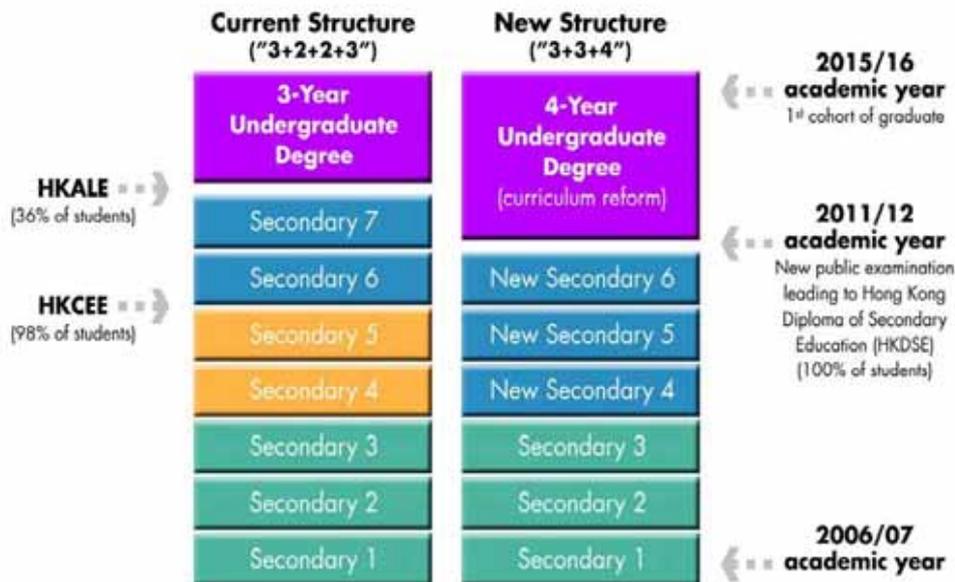
In 1978, Hong Kong introduced a system of nine-year universal education (from the ages of 6 to 15). Most secondary schools offer three-year junior and two-year senior secondary courses leading to the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), followed by a two-year matriculation course leading to the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) for admission to degree programmes. This previous academic structure is Commonly known as '3+2+2+3'. In 2009, Hong Kong introduced a 3-year junior and a 3-year senior secondary education system leading to the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE), and alters the previous three-year university degree structure to a four-year programme, replacing HKCEE and HKALE, and this new academic structure is commonly known as '3+3+4'.

Under the new system, all students will receive 6 years of secondary education (i.e. 3 years of junior secondary and 3 years of senior secondary education). The first cohort of students taught in the new senior secondary (NSS) curriculum will graduate in 2012 after sitting for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination (Education Commission, 2006).

Source: Education Commission (October 2004b) The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – First Stage Consultation Document pp5